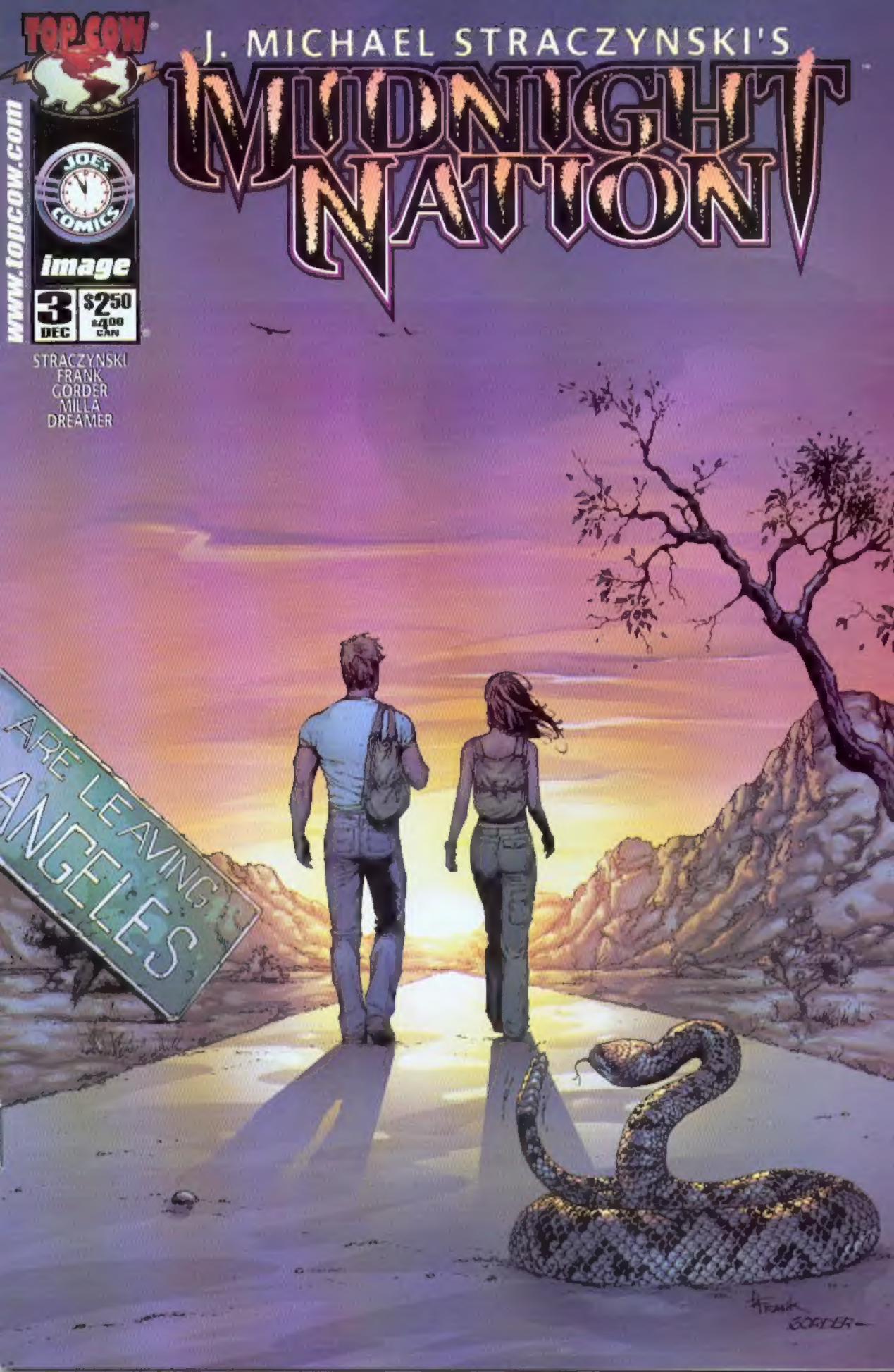
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J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI'S
MIDNIGHT NATION
STRACZYNSKI
FRANK
GORDER
MILLA
DREAMER
ARE LEAVING
ANGELES

midnight nation
created by j. michael straczynski

cover
gary frank
jason gorder
dan kemp
justin ponsor

Last Issue:
Police officer David Grey has had his soul stolen by an evil entity that lives in a world between worlds. Now, stuck in that in between place, and with the help of the mysterious Laurel, he must find the thief and get it back, before it's too late.

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gary frank

inker
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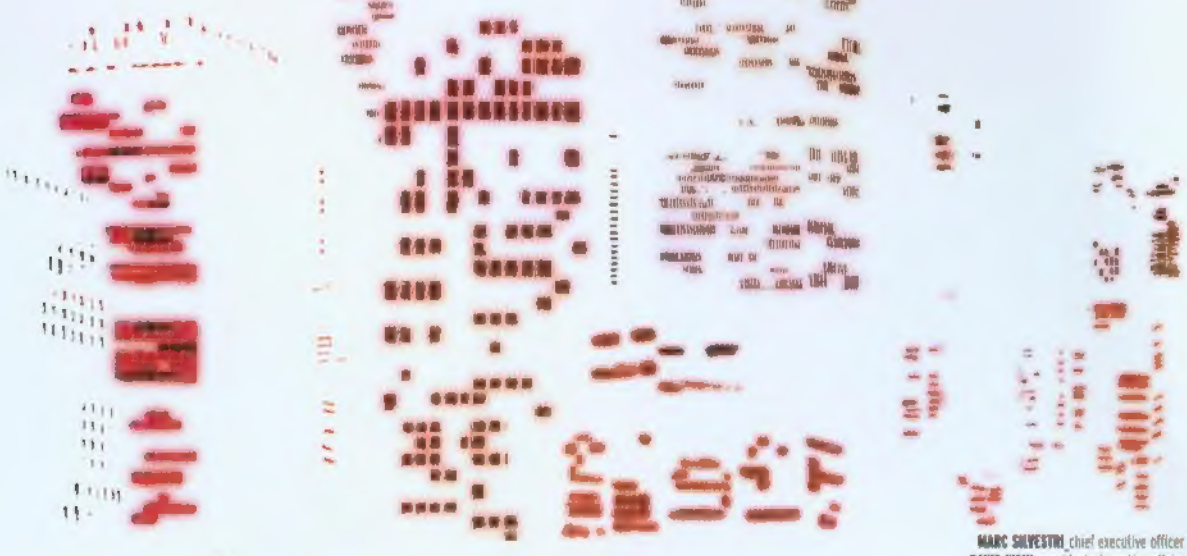

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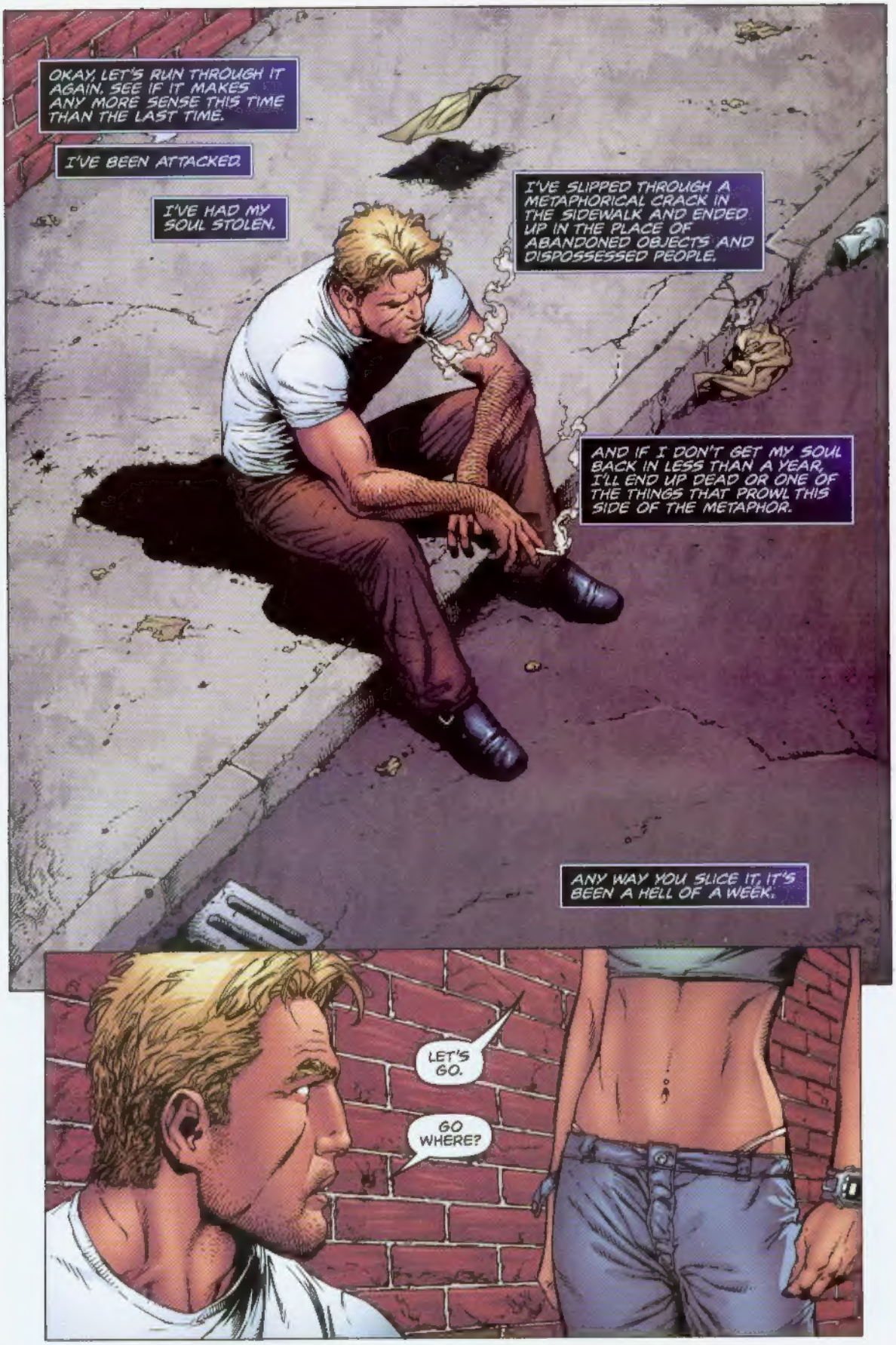
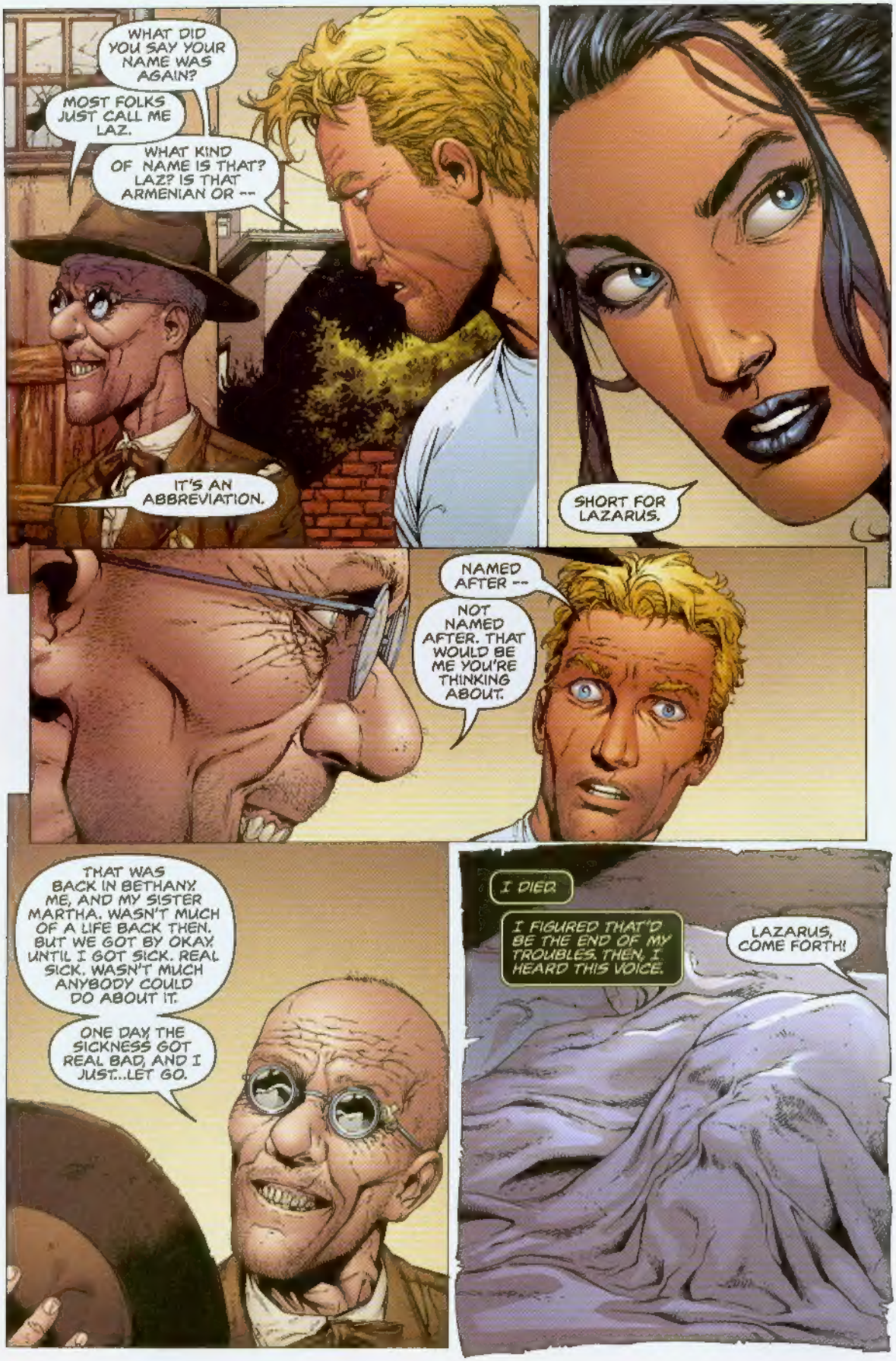

OKAY, LET'S RUN THROUGH IT AGAIN. SEE IF IT MAKES ANY MORE SENSE THIS TIME THAN THE LAST TIME.
I'VE BEEN ATTACKED.
I'VE HAD MY SOUL STOLEN.
I'VE SLIPPED THROUGH A METAPHORICAL CRACK IN THE SIDEWALK AND ENDED UP IN THE PLACE OF ABANDONED OBJECTS AND DISPOSSESSED PEOPLE.
AND IF I DON'T GET MY SOUL BACK IN LESS THAN A YEAR, I'LL END UP DEAD OR ONE OF THE THINGS THAT PROWL THIS SIDE OF THE METAPHOR.
ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT, IT'S BEEN A HELL OF A WEEK.
LET'S GO.
GO WHERE?

AFTER THE GUY WHO STOLE YOUR SOUL.
AND WHERE IS THAT?
WHERE WOULD YOU LOOK FOR A GUY WHO STEALS SOULS?
WASHINGTON D.C.?
TOO OBVIOUS. TRY AGAIN.
NEW YORK?
NEW YORK.
SO WE'D BETTER GET WALKING IF WE'RE GOING TO GET THERE IN TIME.
WALK? WE'RE GOING TO WALK FROM L.A. TO NEW YORK?
ONLY WAY WE'VE GOT ON THIS SIDE. ONLY VEHICLES THAT WORK ON THIS SIDE BELONG TO THE WALKERS. THE REST IS OUTSIDE OUR JURISDICTION.

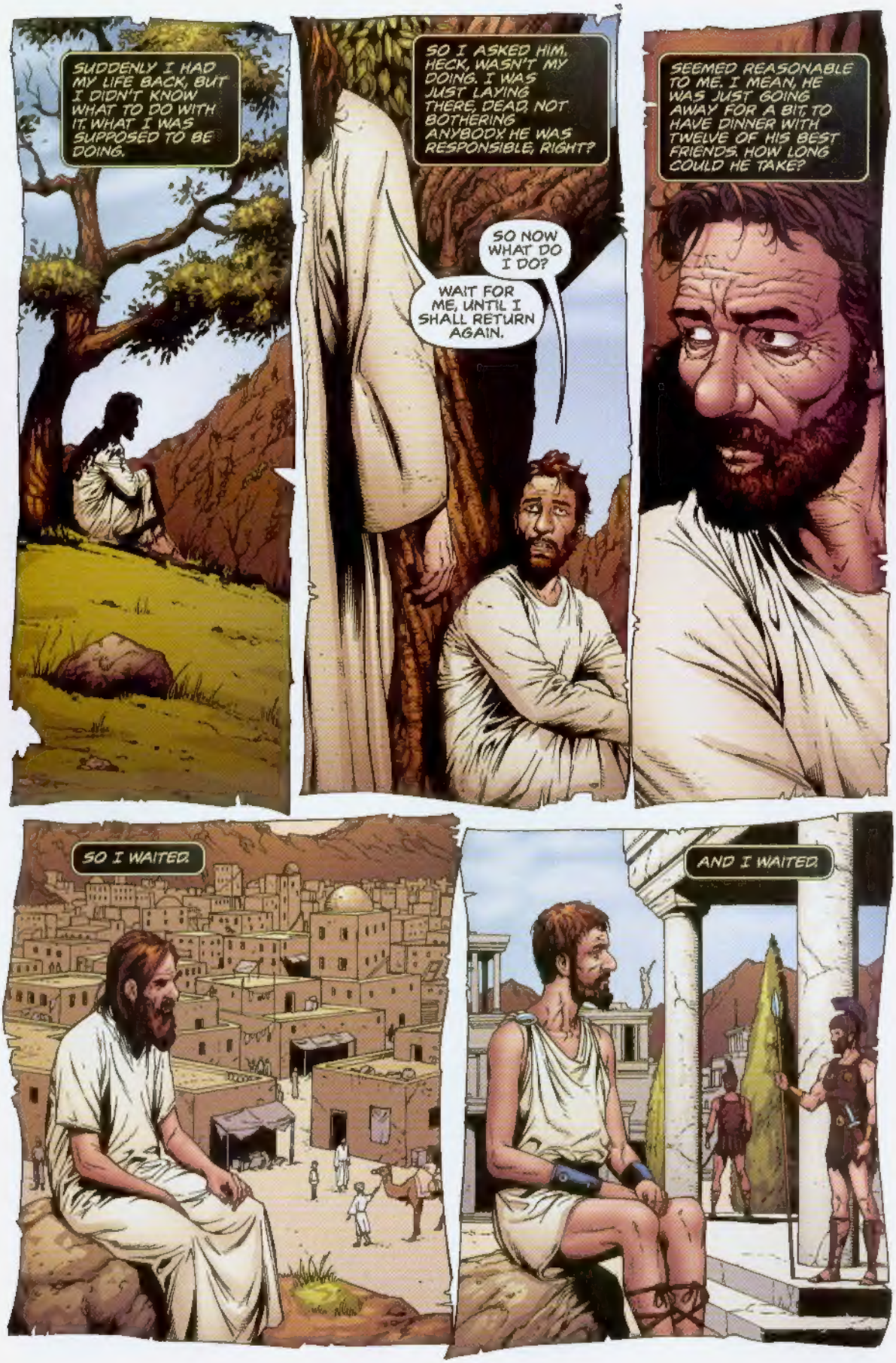
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A FIGHTER.
I AM.
SHOW ME.
WHAT ABOUT SUPPLIES?
WE'LL FIND WHAT WE NEED ON THE WAY.
...SHIT...
HEY...CHECK IT OUT.
WELL, I'LL BE A --

HEY, LAUREL, YOU TAKIN' THE WALK?
YER
HEY! LAUREL'S BACK AND SHE'S TAKING THE LONG WALK WITH SOME GUY!
NO WAY!
GOOD LUCK, LAUREL!
YEAH! GOOD LUCK!
KNOCK 'EM DEAD, LAUREL!
AND YOU TOO, UHM...WELL, WHOEVER YOU ARE.
HAVE MANY OTHER GUYS BEFORE ME TRIED THIS?
A FEW.
HOW MANY MADE IT? I MEAN, GOT THEIR SOUL BACK AND EVERYTHING?
NONE.
OH.
THREE CHEERS FOR LAUREL!

HEY, LAZ.
LAUREL.
FIGURED I'D WALK ALONGSIDE YOU FOR A WHILE, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
NO, I DON'T MIND. DAVID, YOU MIND?
I GUESS NOT. IT'S A LONG WALK, AFTER ALL.
YEP, A LONG WALK.
I WAS TALKING TO ARTHUR, AND I FIGURED IF I GO WITH YOU, I MIGHT FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
AND WHAT'S THAT?
DEATH.
...SHIT...


WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS AGAIN?
MOST FOLKS JUST CALL ME LAZ.
WHAT KIND OF NAME IS THAT? LAZ? IS THAT ARMENIAN OR --
IT'S AN ABBREVIATION.
SHORT FOR LAZARUS.
NAMED AFTER --
NOT NAMED AFTER. THAT WOULD BE ME YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT.
THAT WAS BACK IN BETHANY. ME, AND MY SISTER MARTHA. WASN'T MUCH OF A LIFE BACK THEN. BUT WE GOT BY OKAY. UNTIL I GOT SICK. REAL SICK. WASN'T MUCH ANYBODY COULD DO ABOUT IT.
ONE DAY, THE SICKNESS GOT REAL BAD, AND I JUST...LET GO.
I DIED.
I FIGURED THAT'D BE THE END OF MY TROUBLES. THEN, I HEARD THIS VOICE.
LAZARUS, COME FORTH!

I WAS ALIVE AGAIN. AND THE SICKNESS WAS GONE. FELT SPRY AS A NEWBORN CALF.
MARTHA, WELL, SHE WAS REAL GLAD TO SEE ME AGAIN. LOTS OF FOLKS WERE. AND LOTS OF OTHER FOLKS WERE JUST PLAIN SCARED. CAN'T SAY AS I BLAME THEM.
I HEARD SOME OF 'EM EVEN WANTED ME DEAD. I GUESS THEY FIGURED I WAS A THREAT OR SOMETHING.
HE HAS TO BE PUT TO DEATH. THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO MAINTAIN ORDER.
NOTHING EVER HAPPENED, THOUGH, SO I GUESS SOMETHING CHANGED THEIR MIND.
FUNNY THING WAS...I ATE, AND IT TASTED FINE, BUT I WAS NEVER HUNGRY. I WAS NEVER THIRSTY, OR COLD, OR SICK, OR TIRED. I JUST SORTA...WAS.

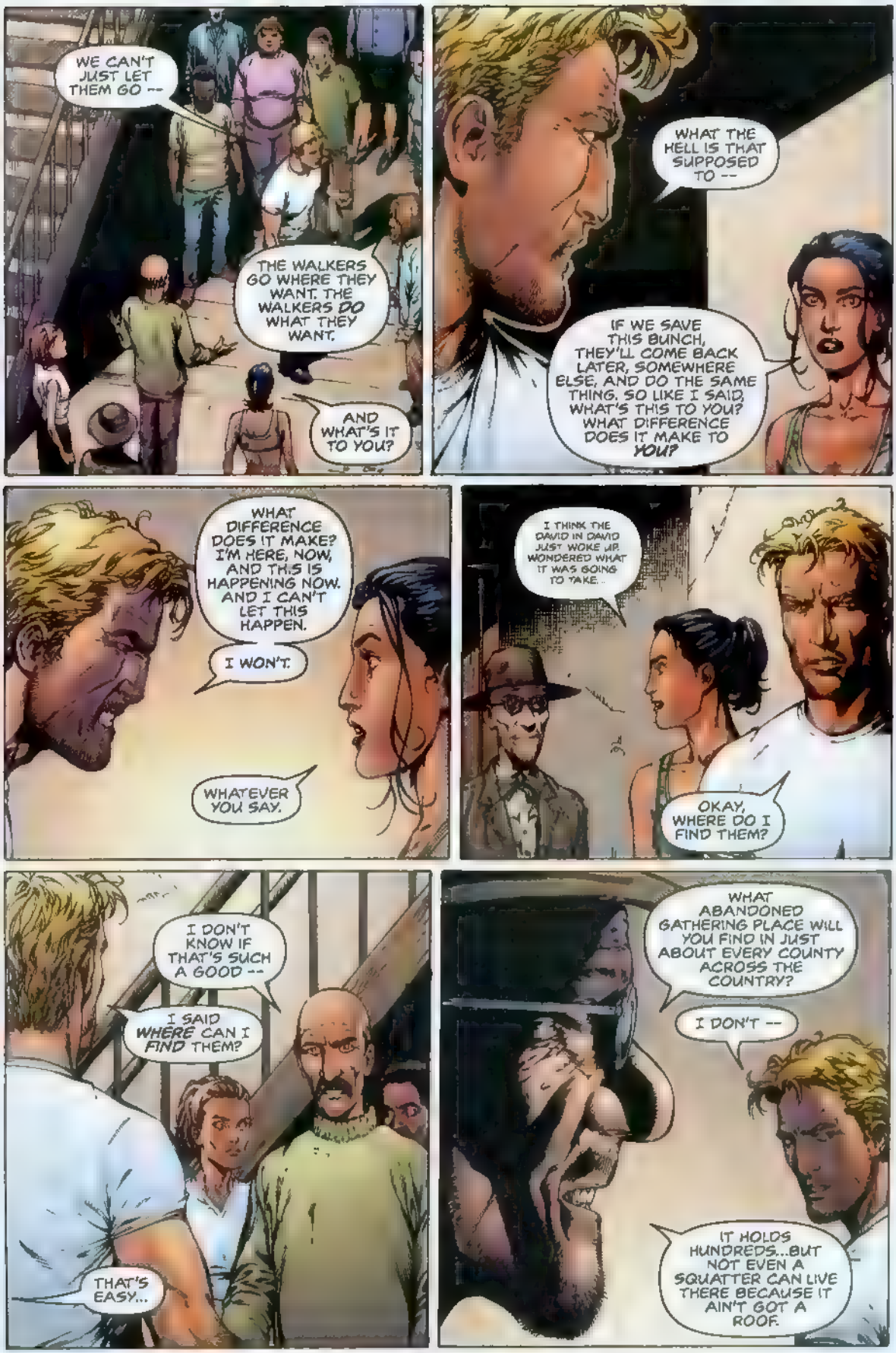

SUDDENLY I HAD MY LIFE BACK, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT. WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DOING.
SO I ASKED HIM. HECK, WASN'T MY DOING. I WAS JUST LAYING THERE, DEAD. NOT BOTHERING ANYBODY. HE WAS RESPONSIBLE, RIGHT?
SO NOW WHAT DO I DO?
WAIT FOR ME, UNTIL I SHALL RETURN AGAIN.
SEEMED REASONABLE TO ME. I MEAN, HE WAS JUST GOING AWAY FOR A BIT, TO HAVE DINNER WITH TWELVE OF HIS BEST FRIENDS. HOW LONG COULD HE TAKE?
SO I WAITED.
AND I WAITED.

AND I WAITED.
AND I WAITED.
AND I WAITED SOME MORE. WAITED FOR HIM. WAITED FOR DEATH.
AND I FINALLY FIGURED OUT WHY NOBODY WAS GIVING ME A HARD TIME. WHY NOBODY EVEN SEEMED TO NOTICE ME.
I'D FALLEN THROUGH THE CRACKS.

SEE, I WAS THE FIRST OF US HERE, IN THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN. LIKE MOST EVERYBODY ELSE HERE, I WAS FORGOTTEN. ABANDONED. LEFT BEHIND SO FAR, WHY, AFTER A WHILE YOU COULDN'T EVEN SEE ME ANYMORE.
YEP, LONG TIME AGO NOW...
YOU BELIEVE ANY OF THIS?
IT'S NOT FOR ME TO SAY.
IS THAT A YES, A NO, OR YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO SAY?
PRETTY DAY, ISN'T IT?
DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'VE GOT ANY GUM ON YOU?
NO.
CHOCOLATE?
NO.
CIGGIES?
SIGH

WE SHOULD REST, GET SOMETHING TO EAT BEFORE WE GO ON.
SO WHERE IS EVERY-BODY?
I DON'T KNOW...LET'S FIND OUT.
FWEEE

I DON'T UNDERSTAND --
HE'S NEW IN TOWN.
OH, DEAR... THEN YOU DON'T KNOW.
FROM TIME TO TIME, THE WALKERS NEED TO FEED. THAT'S WHEN THEY COME IN NUMBERS. THEY TAKE WHATEVER... WHOEVER THEY WANT.
THEY ALWAYS TAKE SOME ADULTS AS...JUNK FOOD. BUT THEY TAKE THE INNOCENTS AS NUTRITION.
THE CHILDREN
CHILDREN? THERE ARE CHILDREN HERE?
I TOLD YOU, THIS IS THE PLACE OF THE LOST, THE FORGOTTEN AND THE ABANDONED.
OF COURSE THERE ARE CHILDREN HERE.
WE KEEP THEM HIDDEN TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE WALKERS.
WE DON'T ALWAYS SUCCEED.


WE CAN'T JUST LET THEM GO --
THE WALKERS GO WHERE THEY WANT. THE WALKERS DO WHAT THEY WANT.
AND WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SUPPOSED TO --
IF WE SAVE THIS BUNCH, THEY'LL COME BACK LATER, SOMEWHERE ELSE, AND DO THE SAME THING. SO LIKE I SAID, WHAT'S THIS TO YOU? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE TO YOU?
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? I'M HERE, NOW, AND THIS IS HAPPENING NOW. AND I CAN'T LET THIS HAPPEN.
I WON'T.
WHATEVER YOU SAY.
I THINK THE DAVID IN DAVID JUST WOKE UP. WONDERED WHAT IT WAS GOING TO TAKE...
OKAY, WHERE DO I FIND THEM?
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S SUCH A GOOD --
I SAID WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?
THAT'S EASY...
WHAT ABANDONED GATHERING PLACE WILL YOU FIND IN JUST ABOUT EVERY COUNTY ACROSS THE COUNTRY?
I DON'T --
IT HOLDS HUNDREDS...BUT NOT EVEN A SQUATTER CAN LIVE THERE BECAUSE IT AIN'T GOT A ROOF.

A DRIVE IN?
YEP.
Clear-View
D IVE-IN
RIS NG TA
JESUS...
WHERE?

NO...PLEASE... I'LL DO ANYTHING, JUST DON'T... PLEASE...

...NO...
PLEASE!
PLEASEEiiiiiEEEEE!

...PRETTTTY... TAAASTY...
HEY --
BACK OFF!
TAAAASTY...
MOVE!

..SHAH!...
RHARRSSSHHH!
...LAAAAUU... RELLL...?
COME ON!

CONTROL
HOLD ON!
CONTROL

SO...WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TELL YOU A STORY?
LOOK OUT!
HOLD ON!

EVERYBODY ALL RIGHT?
YEP. NO SIGN OF IT YET.
GET GOING!
IT'S NO GOOD..THE CHILDREN CAN'T RUN FAST ENOUGH. THEY'LL CATCH US.
WE CAN'T JUST --
LET ME.
I'LL STOP THEM.
NO, YOU CAN'T, YOU'LL --
IT'S OKAY. GO!

SO, HOW'S IT GOING?
GOT ANY GUM?
CHOCOLATE?
...SHAH!...
CIGGIES?

TIME TO GO.
I KNOW...
YOU DID OKAY.
I HAD TO DO SOMETHING.
BECAUSE YOU'RE A POLICE OFFICER?
BECAUSE I'M A HUMAN BEING.
THAT WAY, AT LEAST, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I'M USED TO KNOWING WHAT I'M DOING, I'M USED TO KNOWING THE RULES. BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING HERE! HALF THE TIME I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON.
THEN THERE'S HOPE.
BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING?
EXACTLY.
YOU'RE TOTALLY MESSED UP, YOU KNOW THAT?
NOPE, NOT YET...
NO SIGN OF IT YET. NOPE. BUT MAYBE SOON, THOUGH. WHO KNOWS?
WHO KNOWS...?
TO BE CONTINUED...